ROUTE IN ENVELOPE

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

Confidential

1 - Mr. DeLoach
1 - Mr. Wick
1 - Mr. Gale

TO : Mr. W. C. Sullivan

DATE: 12-1-66

1 - Mr. Sullivan
1 - Mr. Branigan
1 - Mr. Lenihan

FROM : Mr. W. A. Branigan

SUBJECT: REACTION OF SOVIET AND COMMUNIST PARTY OFFICIALS TO THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY

Warren Commission

Re memorandum Mr. DeLoach to Mr. Tolson dated 11-29-66, reporting a conversation Mr. DeLoach had with Marvin Watson of the White House on 11-29-66. Mr. Watson indicated the President desired to have anything in FBI files reflecting immediate reaction of the Soviet Union following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and any reactions noted since then concerning the assassination. The President was also interested in receiving any "trends" indicating that a specific group, including the Communist Party, was back of the attacks on the Warren Commission.

During this same conversation, Mr. Watson indicated that the President had recently seen somewhere a newspaper article reporting that a member of the French Government had recently denounced the assassination investigation. Mr. Watson requested that if we could find this news clipping, we should furnish the President with what we had in our files concerning the matter. A cablegram was sent to the Legal Attache, Paris, in connection with this specific request on 11-30-66, and as soon as results of our inquiries are received, such data will be immediately furnished to Mr. Watson.

During Mr. Watson's conversation with Mr. DeLoach on 11-29-66, Mr. Watson also indicated that the President was seriously considering Mr. L. F. McCollom for a Cabinet position. Mr. Watson requested that the Bureau conduct inquiries concerning Mr. McCollom, including certain interviews. A check of our files disclosed Mr. McCollom was previously investigated at a request from the White House in 1963. We are bringing our investigation up to date and results will be promptly furnished to the White House.

Our files disclosed Soviet officials were shocked and concerned upon receipt of information that President Kennedy had been assassinated. We have received information from several

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sensitive sources that the Soviets were very much concerned over the assassination and, particularly, because they knew so little about President Lyndon B. Johnson and his foreign policy plans as they related to the Soviet Union. The Soviets have frequently expressed the opinion they thought the assassination was a conspiracy planned by the "ultraright." The Soviets were fearful such group planned to effect a "coup" in the United States and utilize this act to stop negotiations with the Soviet Union, attack Cuba and spread the war.

Our files indicate Communist Party officials in the United States followed the Soviet party line and also expressed the opinion the assassination was committed by individuals of the "ultraright" and that more than one individual was involved in the assassination.

From time to time articles have appeared in the Soviet press and in communist publications in this country disagreeing with the conclusions of the report of the Warren Commission. Frequently, authors of these articles quote or use data published by many of the authors who are highly critical of the Warren Commission report, including Mark Lane, Joachim Joesten, Edward Epstein, Richard Popkin, Harold Weisberg and Leo Sauvage.

ACTION:

Attached for delivery to the White House is a memorandum summarizing data in our files concerning reaction of Soviet and Communist Party officials to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

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